

REMARKS

The application has been amended to place the application in condition for allowance at the time of the next Official Action.

Claims 2-5, 8, 31 and 32 are pending in the application.

Claims 2, 4, 31 and 32 were rejected as unpatentable over AOKI et al. 6,995,516 or WIRTH et al. 5,270,657 in view of applicant's disclosed prior art. That rejection is respectfully traversed.

The claims are amended to clarify that the recited elements are part of a layout of a semiconductor circuit.

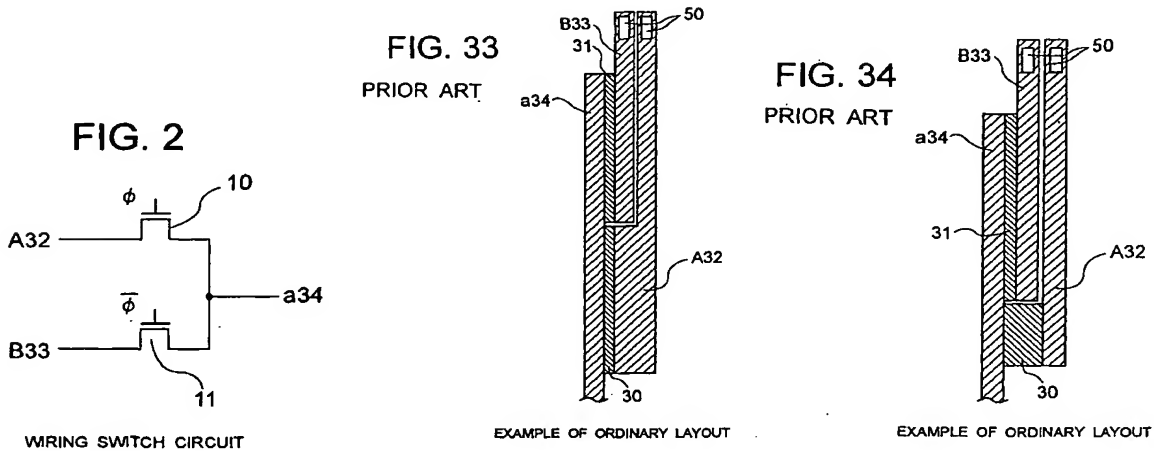
This should have been clear based on the recited "arranged side-by-side" and "placed in a gap between first and second power lines". Such language is based on a layout of a circuit not the circuit itself.

Both AOKI and WIRTH only disclose and show drawings of circuits themselves. The layout of these circuits is not disclosed by these references.

Although applicant's disclosed prior art Figures 33 and 34 show a layout of a circuit, nevertheless, these Figures neither disclose the recited layout nor would suggest the recited layout when viewed in conjunction with either AOKI or WIRTH.

Rather, the circuit and the layout of the circuit are two different concepts. Compare prior art Figures 2, 33 and 34,

reproduced below, wherein both the layouts of Figures 33 and 34 show a circuit with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> power lines A32 and B33 connected to 3<sup>rd</sup> power line A34, which may be represented by the circuit shown in Figure 2.



In view of at least these Figures, it is apparent that the layout of the power supply lines and transistors on the semiconductor substrate is not obvious from the circuit and thus, the recited layout would not have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art when only having the wiring circuits of AOKI and WIRTH before them.

It is only based on hindsight reasoning using information impermissibly gleaned from applicant's specification that the recited layout could be determined. The layout could not be determined from the circuit diagrams of AOKI or WIRTH.

Thus, the rejection of record is not obvious, in the meaning of 35 USC 103(a) and must be withdrawn.

Claims 2 and 4 depend from claim 31 and are believed patentable at least for depending from an allowable independent claim.

In addition, claim 4 recites that an area occupied by all of the power supply lines is larger than the area occupied by all of the regions between the power supply lines.

Such a configuration enables the resistances of the power supply lines to be reduced because the area of the power supply lines is increased.

The position set forth on page 5 of the Official Action is that the recited configuration would have been obvious based on a desire to reduce the size of the device.

However, claim 4 is directed to the relation of the size of the power supply lines and the regions between the power supply lines and the regions. The Examiner's motivation is related to the overall size of the device and is not relevant to the size of the power supply lines compared to the regions between the power supply lines.

Accordingly claim 4 is believed to define over the art of record regardless of the patentability of the claims from which it depends.

Claim 3 was rejected over AOKI et al or WIRTH in view of Applicant's disclosed prior art and further in view of FUJII et al. 6,707,139. That rejection is respectfully traversed.

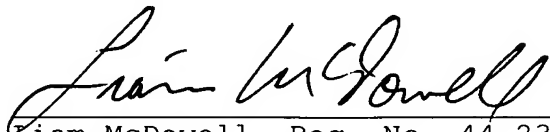
The FUJII reference is only cited for the disclosure of a mutual connection line for connecting power lines having equal potentials. FUJII does not disclose what is recited in claim 31. As set forth above, AOKI or WIRTH in view of Applicant's disclosed prior art do not teach what is recited in claim 31. Since claim 3 depends from claim 31 and further defines the invention, claim 3 is believed patentable at least for depending from allowable independent claim.

In view of the present amendment and the foregoing remarks, it is believed that the present application has been placed in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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